THE RAGTIMER

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THOSE RAGTIME YEARS 1899

by JACK CUFF

The nineties are coming to an end. In this final year of the century it is becoming clear that "Classical Ragtime" is emerging as a new and serious musical form. For the first time the new world has produced a music of its own. Nevertheless, it will require the passage of time before the public will come to a full realization of the merits of ragtime. Ragtime is being condemned because of its association with the sporting house and the saloon and the "down the line" environment in which it is most frequently heard. "Wine, Woman and Song" to the music of Chopin may raise a fashionable eyebrow. But ragtime! It has to be music of the basest order, indeed a work of the devil.

There is one man who has spoken out in the interests and defence of ragtime in this year of 1899. His name is Rupert Hughes and his views on ragtime have been published in the Boston "Musical Record" in its April 1st edition. The article is entitled "Eulogy to Rag Time". In the article he said of ragtime, "it is young and unhackneyed and throbbing with life." One view of his was that because ragtime springs from the musical efforts of the black side it is scorned and at best given little encouragement by the more scholarly of white musicians. Rupert said, "To attempt to prove what the future is going to do would be idle; and I must rest content with trying to describe rag time music as it is, after pausing to remind the sceptic that all oaks were once acorns; that the venerated sonata was once a bundle of popular dances." Rupert lived to see his prediction for the music which became "Classical Ragtime" completely justified. Later on in the fall of 1899 a piano composition is to be published in Sedalia, Missouri called "Maple Leaf Rag" which will become the most famous and lasting touchstone of all the fine classical ragtime music yet to come. But "Maple Leaf Rag" is a story to itself. First we should look at the world about us.

In October the South African War began between the British and the Boers of two Dutch Republics - The Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The Boers invaded British Natal and the Cape Colony. The sieges of Kimberley, Mafeking and Ladysmith opened the engagement.

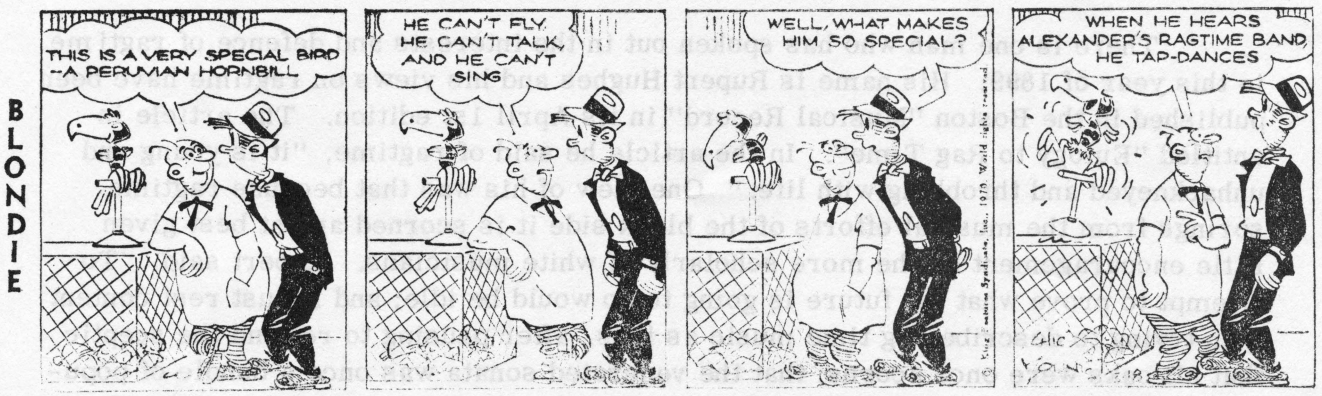
The defeat of China by Japan in the Chinese-Japanese war of 1894-1895 forced China to make extensive concessions and leases to certain major powers in return for loans and other economic assistance. England, Germany, France, Russia, United States, and Japan, all took advantage of the situation. Foreign spheres of influence in China sprang up and this year the United States has moved to obtain an "open door policy" among foreign powers involved as a protection to

A fun composition is THE POP CORN MAN by Jean Schwartz published by Jerome Remick in 1910. Schwartz employs a numerous amount of chord changes within the first 6 bars of the first strain to arrive back at the tonic and this gives the number a novel beginning. The work possesses a tuneful trio and finishes out in fine style. Incidentally, it sounds real great even without the cued-in "Steamboat Whistle".

RAG REVERY is the earliest of the six numbers, published back in 1902 by Shapiro, Bernstein & Co. From the style, it would appear that the composer could have been a banjo player. Seems to me there was a banjo-man back at the turn of the century by the name of George Hamilton. Could this be the same man? Maybe you banjo fanatics can help us with this one.

In closing, we're hoping to get some new members in the Reprint Club this chapter. Also, quite a few subscribers from last year have not renewed. Please let us hear from you, complimentary or otherwise.

Happy ragging!


BLONDIE
THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL BIRD --A PERUVIAN HORNBILL
HE CAN'T FLY, HE CAN'T TALK, AND HE CAN'T SING
WELL, WHAT MAKES HIM SO SPECIAL?
WHEN HE HEARS ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND HE TAP-DANCES

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We have acquired a limited quantity of colourful "cakewalk" pictures.

The pictures are 3 3/4" x 5" mounted on a heavy matt 8" x 10". These would be a suitable addition to your den or recreation room.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at Mr. Tony's Place 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m. in Toronto

BOB DARCH - Fort Lauderdale until March 31, 1970.

BOB DURST - Cherry Creek Inn, Denver to May 4.

GALE FOEHNER - Last Chance Saloon, Rochester.

KEN MAYHERCY - "Ragtime $ Bill" at The Inn, Steamboat Springs, Colo.

MIKE MONTGOMERY - at the Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Fri. and Sat. nights.

MAX MORATH - his off Broadway Show "At The Turn of the Century" is on the road.

KERRY PRICE - at the Red Garter, Detroit, Saturdays.

CHARLIE RASCH - at Anchor Inn, Portage Lake, Mich.

LOWELL SCHREYER - at Michael's Gay 90's Restaurant, Mankato Minn. Sat. nights.

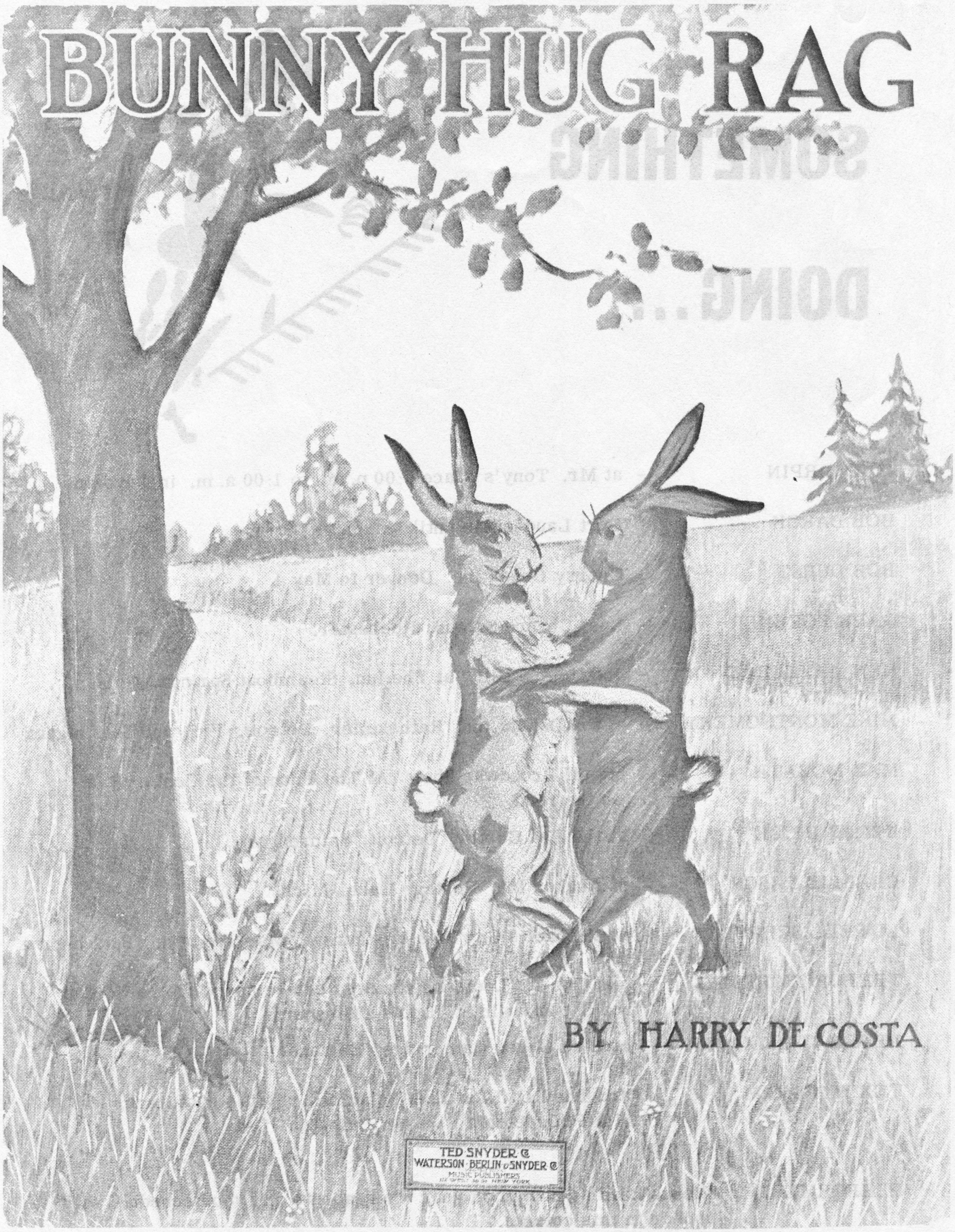
TREBOR TICHENOR - and The St. Louis Ragtimers, can be heard on the Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

PETER TURNER - at Bird Cage, Cambridge, England.

TEX WYNDHAM - and The Red Lion Jazz Band; at Tyler's Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

BUNNY HUG RAG



BY HARRY DE COSTA

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